

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

Notice of Proposed No Further Action PG&E Merced Property 531 West 15th Street, Merced, CA 95340 Public Comment Period: September 19 – October 19, 2019



The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) invites public comment on Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E's) request for regulatory closure (no further action) for their laydown yard property located at 531 West 15th Street in Merced, which is north of PG&E's Service Center property. From 2002 – 2018, PG&E conducted several investigations and remediation efforts in the laydown yard to address soil with elevated levels of diesel, motor oil, arsenic and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). With the completion of the most recent cleanup work in 2018, soil confirmation samples found that the laydown yard has been effectively remediated to ensure the long-term protection of human health and the environment. The Water Board concurred with PG&E's findings and is requesting a land use covenant (LUC) be prepared for the laydown yard and filed with San Joaquin County prior to granting regulatory closure, stipulating that the property would only be used for industrial/commercial uses in the future.

531 West 15th Street Property Background

The 531 West 15th Street property consists of a vacant, fenced lot occupying an approximately 2.2-acre parcel to the north of PG&E's Merced Service Center. It is zoned for mixed commercial and light industrial uses. The Southern Pacific Railroad Company (SP) acquired the property in the late 1800s. Between the late 1800s and early 1960s, the property was used by various lumber companies for storage. A turntable (servicing a former railroad spur) operated along the northern property boundary from the late 1800s until the early 1900s. The Union Pacific Railroad Company (UPRR) acquired SP in 1996. PG&E purchased the property from the UPRR in 2003 and has used it as a laydown yard in support of Service Center operations since.

In the fall of 2002, PG&E collected 10 soil samples across the property to evaluate if the soil had been impacted by past lumber and rail operations. Results showed elevated concentrations of diesel, motor oil and arsenic and in response, PG&E proposed shallow excavations to remove the impacted soil. Under the oversight of the Water Board, PG&E excavated approximately 885 tons (600 cubic yards) of impacted soil and properly disposed the soil at regulated landfills in 2004. During this removal work, "clinker-material" was found just below the ground surface and extending to depths of one to one-and-a-half feet. Clinker-material is comprised of rock and coal or burned wood that was used by the railroad companies. This material contained elevated levels of PAHs, which required that all soil impacted with clinker-material be excavated and removed from the property. Under Water Board oversight, PG&E expanded its initial excavations to remove all soil with visible clinker-material. In 2008, the company removed and properly disposed of an additional 198 tons (125 cubic yards) of clinker impacted soil. Upon completion of excavation work, PG&E collected additional soil samples that showed there were still some locations on the laydown yard property with shallow soil that contained clinker-material.

Recent Remediation Activities

Given the presence of additional soil with clinker-material, the Water Board requested that PG&E excavate additional soil from the property. This excavation work was completed in the spring and summer of 2018 and removed 672 tons of soil impacted with clinker-material. Upon completion of this work, PG&E collected additional soil samples that demonstrated clinker-material had been satisfactorily removed from the laydown yard. All excavations were backfilled with clean, imported sand and covered with gravel.

Water Board Determination

In June 2019, the Water Board concurred with PG&E's findings that the impacted soil has been successfully removed from the property and no further action is required from PG&E. To ensure that the property provides long-term protection of public health and the environment, the Water Board has requested that PG&E record a LUC on the property that restricts future land uses to commercial/industrial uses. After October 19, 2019, the Water Board intends to move forward with granting regulatory closure in the form of a letter indicating No Further Action will be required.

How Can I Provide Feedback?

The Water Board encourages you to review project documents including the December 2018 Amended Remediation Completion Report, Supplemental Remediation document during the comment period from 19 September to 19 October 2019. Community members are requested to submit comments in writing to Heidi Lanza, Central Valley Water by mail to 1685 E. Street, Fresno, CA 93706 or email at, Heidi.Lanza@waterboards.ca.gov. Comments must be received no later than 5 p.m. on October 19, 2019.

Where Do I Get More Information?

General information regarding the laydown yard property can be [obtained from the GeoTracker website](#) (https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=SL0604764750), or by contacting or visiting the Central Valley Water Board's main office at 1685 E Street, Fresno, CA 93706 weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. If you have questions, please contact Heidi Lanza at (559) 445-5579 or Heidi.Lanza@waterboards.ca.gov.